

# JOHN HALMAH VAN WAGONER JR. AND CLARISSA TAPPEN VAN WAGONER



Son of Halmah I. Van Wagoner and Mary Van Houten Van Wagoner.

Born September 1, 1811, at Wanague, New Jersey.

Married Eliza Smith

Married Clarissa Tappen

Married Elizabeth Young in 1856

Married Agnes Melbrose

Married Zella Allen

Died September 1889 in Provo.

Eliza Smith, born September 10, 1815, in New Jersey. She died young, September 15, 1840.

Clarissa Tappen, daughter of George Tappen and Sarah Drew Tappen. Born November 24, 1824, in Pompton, New Jersey. Died January 1914, at Midway.

Elizabeth Young, married in 1856.

John Halmah, by trade, was a carpenter, cabinetmaker, mill wright, wheel wright, and skilled mechanic.

He married five women, and from these marriages had nineteen children.

Eliza died while her children were very young, leaving John to care for the children.

He met Clarissa Tappen in Pompton, New Jersey.

Clarissa and John Halmah were married by a Dutch Reform Minister by the name of Doolittle. After they came to Utah they had their endowments in Salt Lake.

They first heard Mormonism at a meet-

ing in Meads Basin near Pompton, New Jersey. They were baptized in 1842. Shortly after, they moved to Nauvoo.

While in Nauvoo, they helped in the activities of the Church. They were acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith and his wife, Emma. Clarissa visited in their home frequently.

Before leaving New Jersey they sold their property. They gave \$500.00 to the church as their contribution to help finance the immigrants.

They moved from Nauvoo to Winter Quarters in David Wood's Company.

They returned to Iowa to secure an outfit with which to continue the journey to Salt Lake valley. At Honey Creek, Iowa, he built a grist mill.

A daughter, Hester, became very ill and died. Her father made a casket of shingles and her mother made her clothes. With sad hearts they laid her to rest under a chestnut tree.

In the meantime, his father and mother who had accompanied them to Winter Quarters became ill with cholera and died. There were 600 of the Saints who died of the disease at that time. This was during the year 1847. John Halmah and his brother-in-law, Jno. Fairbanks made coffins from their wagon box and laid them to rest.

Before leaving new Jersey they sent many of their belongings with Samuel Brannon around Cape Hope to San Francisco, California. With them was a small grist mill John Halmah had made. The goods were to be transported overland to Salt Lake. They never saw any of those things again.

Clarissa said that they were often very weary from traveling, but when the evening meal was over and the children were in bed they sang and danced. Her favorite song, "Come, Come, Ye Saints," gave them the courage that no other song did. It buoyed them up until the journey's end. They arrived in Salt Lake September 20, 1852.

In 1856 he married his third wife, Elizabeth Young. Seven children were born to them.

His fourth wife was Agnes Melbrose, and his fifth wife was Zella Allen. Neither of these wives had children.

John Halmah built flour mills at Fort Supply, Fort Bridger, at Payson for Charles B. Hancock, at Provo for Joseph Kelton (this was later known as the Tanner Mills), at Mt. Pleasant, and one at Midway.

In 1861 he moved his families to Midway to the lower settlement. It was here that he built the first grist mill in the county. He hauled the granite from American Fork, using two yokes of oxen. It was a long, slow journey with the heavy granite. He used a hammer and chisel to carve the mill wheel and make it round.

This same wheel is now on the top of the Daughters of the Pioneers monument in Midway.

They lived in the fort at Midway when the Indians became troublesome.

While living in Midway he helped build homes. At this time he paid one dollar and twenty cents a pound for nails. He built a home for President Hatch at Heber. He also made furniture for this home. He furnished his wives' homes with furniture he had made.

On several occasions he furnished oxen and wagons to bring immigrants from the Missouri River to Utah. He not only designed and made furniture but he built many wagons.

John Halmah and his sons, David, William and Henry, were musicians. John Halmah and David furnished music for dances in the early days. He made a musical instrument called the dulcimer.

He was a friend to the Indians. They would do anything for him. He was a kind, good father to his families, and was a good neighbor. He was a member of the High Priest Quorum and died faithful to the gospel.

Clarissa's home at first was a log room with an attic above. She had many mouths to feed but did this by cooking her meals on a griddle bake oven and by hanging kettles over a fireplace. Food was scarce, but the boys helped by catching fish.

She sewed and worked by candle light. Sewing was all done by hand.

With all the hardships she never complained. She was always jovial and happy. She had a strong testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel.

She taught the gospel to her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She was a loving, kind mother and neighbor. She was hospitable and charitable.

Her mind was keen to the very last. She enjoyed living. She lived to be 90 years, two months and ten days old.

Children of John Halmah Van Wagoner and Eliza Smith:

David, married Julia Provost  
Mrs. Alfred (Mary) Newell  
Children of John Halmah Van Wagoner and Clarissa Tappen:

Ephraim, married Catherine Hamilton  
Hester, died in childhood

John, married Margaret Faucett

Mrs. Joseph (Ann) Bagley

Mrs. Everice (Cynthia) Bronson

William—Lelia Alexander—Nora Jacques

Mrs. David (Clarissa) Provost

Henry did not marry

Orson died in infancy

George, married Eva Bunnell

Children of John Halmah Van Wagoner and Elizabeth Young:

John Alfred, married Sarah Stark

Franklin Douglas, married Mary Hansen

Mrs. Joshua (Mary) Graves

Mrs. Richard (Elizabeth A.) Sutton

Mrs. Eugene (Stella Jane) Titus

Parley Pratt, married Mary Jones

Mrs. John D. (Lilly Maud) Fisher.

Van Wagoner Grist Mill  
Est By 1862

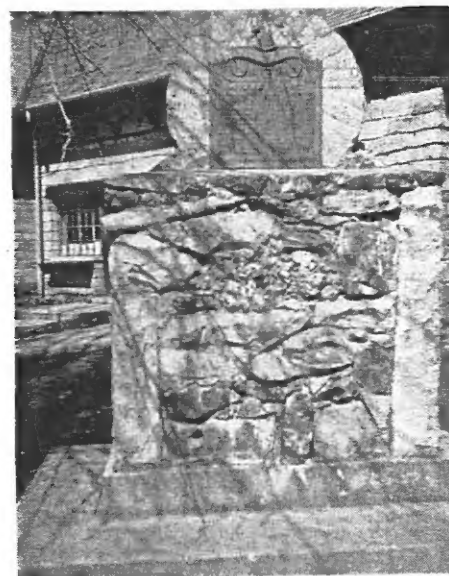


The Indian Peace Treaty Monument, Heber—The inscription reads: "Daughters of Utah Pioneers No. 50. Erected September, 1939. Indiana Peace Treaty. Beautiful Provo Valley named from the river and once Chief Walker's hunting ground. Was colonized 1850-60 by 18 families called by President Brigham Young. In 1864 Indian troubles forced the pioneers to build a fort at Heber. Bishop Joseph S. Murdock who was friendly with the Indians invited Chief Tabby and tribe to his home (three blocks north and one east) August 20, 1867 where a peace treaty was signed and a barbecue held on John Carroll's lot. This ended Indian depredations in the valley, proving Brigham Young's statement "It is better to feed the Indians than to fight them."

erected a marker and monument in the southwest corner of the Charleston Town Lot in memory of the early settlers of Charleston. The marker's inscription reads as follows: "The Daughters of Utah Pioneers. No. 71. Erected Sept. 7, 1941—CHARLESTON PIONEERS—In 1859 George Noakes and William Manning and families came to Provo Valley and settled near Noakes Spring (two blocks north and two blocks west) where they built the first homes. Other settlers soon followed and a church and school house were erected. George Noakes became a leader among the settlers and won the friendship of the Indians. Many of the old landmarks are now covered by Deer Creek Reservoir. The kettle on top of this monument was brought across the plains in 1847."

Because the Deer Creek Reservoir claimed much of Charleston's area, membership dwindled in the camp and it was discontinued in the early 1940's.

In 1930 a DUP camp was organized at Wallsburg and selected the name Maple Leaf Camp. However, meetings were held only a year or two. Officers of the camp during its tenure included Leona F. Allen, captain; Mary F. Davis, first vice captain; Ora Davis Parcell, second vice



The Midway Fort Monument, Midway—The inscription reads: "Daughters of Utah Pioneers No. 59. Erected July 21, 1940. Midway Fort. When this valley was settled in 1859 two colonies were established on the West side of the Provo River. A lower and upper settlement, the latter called Mound City. In 1866 Indian depredations caused the formation of the Wasatch County Military District and brought the people of the two settlements together for security. About seventy-five families erected homes on this site. Sidney H. Epperson was the presiding elder. The location being midway between the two sites, by common usage became Midway."

captain; Polly G. Parcell, secretary; Polly Bigelow Allred, treasurer; May S. Ford, recording secretary; Polly B. Hendrickson, registrar and Stella B. Ford and Susanna Batty, cheer and entertainment.

The work of collecting pioneer relics and recognizing prominent historical events and landmarks has been uppermost in the minds of Wasatch County DUP leaders. Immediately after organization the Daughters were given the second floor of the old tithing office on Main Street as a relic room. When this building was sold, J. R. Murdock, president of Wasatch Stake, gave the Daughters an upstairs room in the Seminary building to house their relics. Those who have been in charge of the relics room have included Mrs. Ella Murdock Watson, Mrs. Martha Jones Blackley, Mrs. Florence Duke Johnson and Mrs. LaVern Fisher.

In Midway the Daughters have a beautifully decorated room in the Community Building, serving both as a relic room and a meeting place.

There are presently nine historical markers in the county which have been erected by the Daughters. Four of the monuments are in Midway, and commemorate Mrs. Cordelia Wilson, pioneer nurse; old Fort Midway and the first flour mill in the valley; the old lime kiln and the first pioneer cemetery. Two monuments in Heber commemorate